



Beaver Creek Church of the Brethren

5651 Beaver Creek Rd., Bridgewater, VA 22812 * Glenn Bollinger, Pastor

Sunday School 9:45 * Worship Service 11:00

Church Office 540-828-2767

E-mail: secretary@beavercreekchurchva.org

Church Office hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Website: <http://beavercreekchurchva.org>

Send newsletter items to Regina Harlow at newsletter@beavercreekchurchva.org

Beaver Creek Church of the Brethren and *Beaver Creek COB Youth* on

www.twitter.com/beavercreekers on

This month's birthdays

- 1 Ashley Plaugher
- 3 Stanley Suter
- 3 Leesa Jordan
- 8 Megan Liskey
- 8 Beth Rhodes
- 13 Candy Hensley
- 15 Emmett Grove
- 16 Carolyn Wine
- 22 Cole Wiseman
- 24 Ryan Mays
- 25 Zach Wampler
- 26 Brittany Southerly
- 26 David Healy
- 27 Zena Debyan Ballou Jr
- 28 Amy Jordan
- 28 Michael Corder
- 28 Gabriel Corder
- 29 Dennis Miller
- 29 Ceci Dastoli
- 29 Brad Eckard
- 30 Frances Cook

If your birthday is this month and you don't see your name, contact the church office at the number above.

December 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- 1—Hanging of the Greens 5pm
- 3—Women's Fellowship, 7pm
- 4—Women's Fellowship 9:30am
- 6—Ladies Bake Night 5pm
- 7—Women's Fellowship Christmas Auction 5:30pm food available, auction at 7
- 10—Mixed Bible Study, 10am
- 15—Children's Christmas Program, 6 pm
- 17—Youth help at Food Pantry 7pm
- 19—Leadership Team Meeting, 7 pm
- 21—Bell ringing 9am-6pm
- 24—Mixed Bible Study, 10am
- 24—Christmas Eve Service 11pm
- 19—Unhanging of the Greens 12:30pm



Dec 1, 5-7 p.m. Hanging of the Greens

Everyone is invited to share in an evening filled with the Christmas Spirit as we prepare Beaver Creek Church for the Advent Season. Each Family Should Bring a **finger food** to be shared for our evening meal (Drink and table service will be provided), A **Christmas** ornament to be exchanged (please wrap and include your name inside), **Canned food and paper products** for the Bridgewater Area Food Bank, **Fruit for baskets** for our shut-ins, a **Christmas card** for Beaver Creek Congregation to be hung on the bulletin board, a **donation** of the amount you would normally spend sending Christmas cards to church members. This donation will be given to Bridgewater Area Food Bank. Anyone who wishes can also make a special donation to the Children's Giving Tree. You may bring a children's winter clothing item such as mittens, gloves, hats, or scarves with which to decorate the tree. New or gently used, these items will bring welcome warmth to needy children in the area this winter.

Dec 7: 5:30 food available 7 pm Women's Fellowship Christmas Auction

Call for hand-crafted and home-baked items. The Women's Fellowship will be holding its traditional Christmas Auction on December 7th. This annual evening of fun and fellowship raises money for the Women's Fellowship outreach and church support projects. We would like to ask everyone to be thinking of items you can make and donate. The tradition is for items to be home crafted in some way. Quilts, comforts, sewing, canning, wild harvest, woodwork, locally grown plants and crafts – this just scratches the surface of possibilities. Here are some suggestions for preparing auction items: Hand-crafted items sell well. This can include woodworking projects, sewing projects, general crafts and original art. Items from your kitchen sell well, including home-baked and home-canned goods. Think about adding ribbons or other decorations to make items especially suitable for gift-giving. A nice container is a big plus for many things. To keep the auction moving, it's better to prepare a few premium items than lots of small items. – a full plate of cookies, for example, rather than many small plastic bags with a few cookies in each. Non-hand-crafted items, such as purchased or used toys or household items, tend not to sell well and are not popular with our auctioneer. Theme baskets with many related items work better than offering the items separately. This is one place that purchased items can be good because of the combinations and variety. You may bring your donations to the Fellowship Hall the night of the auction. On auction night the Outreach Class offers a nice selection of auction food for supper right before the auction begins. The Women's Fellowship is grateful for the donations received in previous years, and we all look forward to a great auction this year. ~ Submitted by Jane Wood

Throughout the season of Advent, Outreach and Missions is sponsoring a giving drive for the Bridgewater Area Food Pantry. Each Sunday of Advent we will highlight a needed item, although any item can be brought any Sunday. Items that are brought may be placed under the Chrismon tree. Featured items will be: **December 1** – Canned Goods, **December 8** – Boxed Cereal, Peanut Butter, **December 15** – Staple Items, **December 22** – Paper Products.

Additional announcements on Page 2

Announcements Continued...

Advent Music Minutes for kids through grade 5 are set for the beginning of the Sunday School hour in the Fellowship Hall each Sunday of Advent (December 1, 8, 15, 22). We'll sing some songs and hymns of the season, and also practice music for the Children's Christmas Play. We'll sing for five to 10 minutes and then the kids will go straight to their regular Sunday School classes. Adults and Sunday School teachers are also welcome to join us! Advent Music Minutes are hosted by the Special Needs Sunday School Class. ~ Submitted by Bill Wood

December 13: Steele and Alice Fundraiser, 7 pm at Garber's COB. There will be live music, video from Ukraine, refreshments, and more information on our vision for the Carpathian region of Ukraine presented by Leah Mix, an intercessory missionary at the Fredericksburg Prayer Furnace.

December 21: Salvation Army Bell Ringing Saturday 9-6 at Dayton Farmer's Market. Sign-up sheet in back of church.

2014 Directories – please verify and make any corrections to your information in the current directory. Don't forget about your email address. The directory is hanging on the bulletin board.

The Fidelas Class will be making two layer red velvet and two layer coconut cakes in time for Christmas. Cakes will be made and frozen ahead of time. A minimum \$20 donation is requested. Deadline to request a cake is December 15th. All proceeds will benefit the Tinsley Family. Tina is a previous co-worker of Candy Hensley and friend. Tina has cystic fibrosis and was hospitalized for 8 weeks recently with a life threatening infection that the doctors had a hard time treating and finding antibiotics to react. Her health has had many ups and downs over the years. Tina has had tremendous faith in God to take care of her and she has received many miracles. She was given twins (boy & girl) almost 4 years ago when not giving up because of her health condition. This last illness was most hardest because her life expectancy was very low. She lost her brother to the same infection a year ago. Her brother had FC also. Tina surprised everyone when she was able to receive new lungs from a donor. Two weeks after the transplant, oxygen levels were 100% and she was able to return home to her family. Tina's prognosis is very good. She will no longer combat the liquid in her lungs she once did. Insurance pays very little of the transplant costs. They are behind on bills because of Phillip not being able to work and traveling back and forth from Staunton to UVA. Your donation will help them get back on their feet. The Fidelas Class will purchase Walmart Cards for them. The Fidelas Class appreciates your support.

The Plight of the Homeless

What are we called to do? ~ Submitted by Greg Evans

I had the opportunity to volunteer with Open Doors (used to be called HARTS) on Monday evening/night Nov. 18th at Montezuma COB. Beaver Creek hosted 3 nights, providing supper, breakfast and 2 overnight volunteers.

The very next day in passing conversation with a fellow church person (not from Beaver Creek), the all too familiar line was spoken. "It's a shame about the homeless BUT it is their own fault, they bring it on themselves." That got me to thinking and reflecting. Why are they there and what are we called to do?

I had the chance to hear a few of their stories on Monday night. From eating supper together to sitting up late playing games. From early morning smoke break to working side-by-side cleaning up breakfast, we briefly shared life together. They shared their stories and asked about my story. I overheard conversations and watched as some people stayed on their mats avoiding everybody. I also had the chance to talk with Richard the next morning. Richard has volunteered with Open Doors since it started. He is now a paid staff person in charge of overnight safety and security.

So why are the homeless there? I can't speak for them, but from what I observed - here is what I think. Some are there simply because of the economy. Lost their job or cut back. Several of the guys work part time, just not enough to get them on their feet. One guy had a couple driving mishaps, which led to loss of insurance, which meant no more truck driving. I also saw those with medical conditions that lead them to be homeless. There was also a group of younger healthy guys who I overheard having a scientific conversation about how to pass a drug test so they could get a job. The obvious answer of "quit doing drugs" didn't seem an option. The list of reasons could go on and on, but what are we called to do?

For this answer I turn to scripture and the teachings of Jesus. The first scripture that came to mind was John 8 where the woman caught in adultery is brought before Jesus. The Pharisees say to Jesus (my paraphrase), "The law commands us to stone her, but what do you say?"

Jesus bends down and writes on the ground then he says, (again my words) "Whoever is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone."

Of course the Pharisees one by one slip away, leaving only Jesus and this woman. Now remember this woman was caught commit-

Maybe We Are Asking the Wrong Questions ~ Submitted by Greg & Elizabeth Evans

As I reflect on my evening spent with the homeless, I'm faced with the fact that my first reaction was to ask some questions. Questions like, "Why does he have a laptop? Why does almost everybody have a smart phone? How can they afford those shoes, that coat, those cigarettes?"

Spending the evening eating with and playing a mean game of rummy with these homeless folks, I'm forced to examine some preconceived ideas about who the homeless are. One line of thought that seems to be prevalent is that to be homeless you have to be totally broke with no income, that you have to be totally helpless. When in fact a person could have quite a nest egg saved up and still not be able to meet the requirements of an apartment lease. A lot of rental agreements call for the first and last months rent along with a security deposit all being paid before you move in. Then there are hookup fees for electric, sewer and trash. All of this is assuming of course that you haven't had a previous eviction on your record. That news travels fast through out the landlords and usually means no second chance.

It's a slippery slope in this world when you are living paycheck to paycheck with no family to help you out if something goes wrong. Suppose your car needs \$200 dollars in repair, where does that come from? Maybe a payday loan—now that's a mistake. Soon you're late on rent to pay your loan, then late on car payment to make rent. It doesn't take much for this fragile financial world to come crumbling down.

Throw in some poor spending decisions when there is a little excess cash and you really don't have any cushion. So all of a sudden you are homeless. Either you don't have family and friends in this area or maybe they are in as bad of shape as you are. Maybe you have used up all of their grace and don't think you can turn to them again. Whatever the case, you are on the streets.

So what happens to your few possessions from your apartment? Maybe you leave most of them; maybe you store them; maybe you give most away. But why not hang on to what you can carry? Keep that nice coat, you'll need it. Those new shoes will come in handy since you lost your license and now have to walk everywhere. Might as well stick that laptop in your bag and carry it with you. And what about that smart phone? It's your only connection with the rest

Note from the editor, Sorry for the small font throughout this newsletter. I did not set out to make this newsletter issue specifically focused on homelessness. Lee and I have been so drawn in to the story of Tim and Lori's encounter with James, that I begged, coerced, twisted arms, and resorted to all forms of bribery to get the story in writing. (Just kidding of course, but I did nag.) It just so happened that his submission came when our church helped provide meals for the homeless through Open Doors and I asked for submissions about that from the Evans'. Look for additional articles from Tim as James' saga unfolds.

To Give, or Not to Give?

Submitted by Tim Grove: A three-part series on my encounter with a homeless man.

We've all seen them. Poorly dressed men - and women - standing on the side of the road at interstate exits, holding signs that speak of hardship and that ask for help. In recent years it seems that every off-ramp in Augusta County has been occupied by one of these "poor", and the same faces often appear day after day, month after month. I write "poor" because our mind easily defaults to certain assumptions about the men and women who choose to set up in such a location. When the light turns red, there is a captive audience, and the turnover of vehicles is extremely high. Who knows how many cars pass by in a day? Who knows if these people are really in need, or if they make more at the roadside than by actually working a real job like me? Are they homeless, or is it an easy con? Are they asking for money for food, or will they spend it on alcohol? How do I know if they will actually use my donation wisely? Perhaps the light will turn green soon and I can drive on without giving anything.

As someone who rarely carries cash, the excuse for me was easy, but the nag wouldn't go away. I decided to offer conversation instead of money. I bought breakfast for one guy and offered to find part-time work for another. I listened to each story and tried to discern the validity of their claims. Was it true hardship or just a well-rehearsed line? I always gave cash when I had it, and sometimes felt like I had traded money for the right to interview them and require a back-story to their situation.

And then I met James.

I had seen him at the Weyers Cave exit for months. I'd heard his story and taken his phone number, I'd promised to look for work and had given him money. Several times. But there he was in Fishersville with the same sign and the same stooped-over posture, and I began to feel a little cheated. Surely this guy was a pro, not counting on his Weyers Cave clientele spotting him at another perch. I had him in my crosshairs.

It was 12:30 and I decided to offer him lunch. McDonalds was next door and a shared meal would buy me a half hour of conversation. As I turned off the exit ramp, however, two realities immediately set in. First, I was committed. I had made the decision to offer my time to him, and changing course on

that decision was not an option. The second reality was that I was at the intersection of I-81 and Tinkling Springs Road in Fishersville, an afterthought of traffic planners and one of the least driver-friendly spots in the Valley. This was the exit for Expoland and the Augusta Medical Center, and in the lunchtime traffic there would be no swinging back past and talking to this man from the truck. I would have to park and walk.

I pulled into the lot and parked, then hoofed it about 75 yards along the inside of the guardrail to where he was sitting. He didn't stand as I approached him, but rather just looked at me curiously as I asked if he had eaten lunch. He had, and he made sure I knew he was thankful for the offer and that he'd have gladly taken me up on it if I were an hour earlier.

Now what. I'd walked this far and created my opportunity to hold him accountable for working the system, but my chance for a private conversation over a hamburger had disappeared.

I pointed to my work truck in the parking lot. "I work for 'Houff's' and I've seen you at the exit in Weyers Cave," I blurted out. "You've been there for many months."

"Yeah," he replied, "I gave you my phone number when you offered work last fall and you never called me."

BOOM. Score one for James. His comment caught me completely off guard and hit me square in the chest. He was right, and he had remembered. I had assumed that as one of several hundred people passing by in any given day, I would be just another anonymous Joe to him. He didn't let me get away with that false security. He wasn't confrontational, but he let me know in that comment that my "I've caught you" attitude wouldn't get far with him.

So, I sat down. I tried to recall his work skills that we had talked about nine months prior, and he corrected me when I was wrong. I got his name and number (again), and realized that I couldn't deliver an empty promise this time. I had made quite an effort to come speak to him and I needed to show that there was substance to my offer.

Truth be told, the work he could help me with was my own - at home. Lori and I doubled the size of our yard last spring and I was more than a little behind on things around the house. With the 4th of July only a few weeks away, I hadn't thrown the first scoop of

mulch, and I didn't know when I would get it done. I wanted to offer a day of work, but we were still strangers sharing a guardrail along an exit ramp and I had no idea if he was someone to trust or not.

I asked him if others had offered work, and he told me that he gave his number to many "prospects" but rarely got a call. He had done some painting and some yard work - the occasional odd job, but nothing steady enough to keep him off the street. He was very open with the conversation from the very beginning. I asked him where he stayed at night, and he pointed to a patch of woods across the road. He always worked either the Weyers Cave or Fishersville exits, and he had a place to lie down at each site. He'd stay under a bridge in the rain, and in a hotel room a few nights a week when it got cold. He talked about staying at the Valley Mission in Staunton, and how he'd rather sleep on the ground. He talked about how much money he made when I asked, and he told me how he spent it.

For 15 minutes, we sat there together and he answered all of my questions. For 15 minutes, the cars stopped and started at the traffic light and not one window rolled down. We were clearly not together; he was unshaven and wore faded jeans and a camo jacket, while I wore a freshly ironed collared shirt. The people in the passing cars looked on with all manner of expressions. None spoke.

I was beginning to feel comfortable with James when he made an unexpected comment. He said, "The Bible says that foxes have holes in the ground and birds have their nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

He was comparing his homelessness to the scripture in Matthew 8 where Jesus talked about the cost of discipleship. When I asked if he read the Bible, he said, "Every day. There's not much else to do."

I had to know more.

I told James that I wanted to have him come help me with some yard work on Saturday, but that I needed to make sure my wife and small child were comfortable having a stranger around the house. He understood, and we agreed to talk in a few days. I gave him my number and shook his hand, stood, and began the hike back to my truck.

"God Bless You," he called.

"He has," I thought.

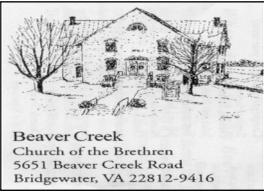
"Maybe we are asking the wrong questions" continued from page 2

From Page 2

of the world. It's your internet, it's where you can search for jobs and housing. Where you can keep in touch with whatever family and friends you might have. It might be your last grasp at some dignity.

So maybe I have been asking the wrong questions. Maybe instead of asking about his new shoes, I should question why I have more shoes than will fit on two door racks and a floor rack. Maybe when I see her nice coat I should be asking myself why I have 6 coats hanging in my closet and I complain that I don't have enough coat hooks. Maybe

when I wonder about his laptop, I should be wondering why we have 3 computers at home. When I look at them with their smart phones, I should remember that if I get a mile down the driveway and realize I don't have my smart phone that I have to turn around and go get it. And when I question how can they afford to smoke, I should be questioning how I can afford a cup of coffee at McDonald's everyday when there are starving people in the world that I could be feeding. Maybe instead of asking why God would allow there to be homeless people, I should be asking, "What am I doing about it?"



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“What are we called to do” continued from page 2

ting adultery, not only breaking the law, but breaking one of the Ten Commandments. It is her fault she is there—sure the Pharisees are just using her to try and trap Jesus, But she is GUILTY. Jesus bends over writing again and when he straightens up, all of the Pharisees are gone. He looks around and says, “Woman where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

She says, “No one Lord.”

Jesus says, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and don’t sin anymore.”

Did you catch that? She is guilty, it is her fault, she is a sinner, and yet Jesus didn’t say, “If you clean up your act, I won’t condemn you.” He didn’t point out everything she has done wrong and the steps she must take to change. He didn’t even say, “If you promise not to sin anymore, I’ll let you go. If you start going to church then I’ll let you go.” No, he forgives first—unconditionally, no strings attached. He tells her to go and don’t sin anymore because He loves her and He knows that sin not only hurts us, but it separates us from Him. He wants what is best for her, but He demands nothing in return. As I apply this to serving the homeless, I can see that Jesus doesn’t condemn, He loves. He doesn’t put conditions on His compassion.

As these thoughts start flooding my mind, I am reminded of another often heard opinion concerning helping the homeless (I’m sorry to say I shared these ideas in years past). This thought whether spoken or not, usually goes something like this. “We have to be good

stewards. I would give to that person begging, but they would probably just go spend it all on beer or drugs anyway.” This is something we each have to struggle with, but for me as I look at how much money I waste on myself, I’m pretty convicted that I’m not being that great of a steward anyway. As I was reflecting on this in light of my night spent with the homeless, I was reminded that not only did Jesus not condemn, instead he had compassion.

Jesus also commanded us to feed the hungry and the thirsty, clothe the naked, and visit those in hospitals and also those in prison. Did you catch that? You don’t choose to be in the hospital—it’s out of your control. You don’t consciously make decisions thinking, “this might not work out then I would be hungry, thirsty or naked.” But most people in prison deserve to be there. They did something wrong and they knew it was wrong. They knew it had consequences—they are getting what they deserve. Why then would Jesus have us visit them? He has compassion. He has love, even when we don’t deserve it.

For me, maybe I’m wasting my money and time when I see somebody with a cardboard sign up and I give them some money or take them some food. Maybe we should make those young healthy guys get off drugs and try to get a job before we serve them sausage gravy for breakfast. Maybe all these people should be interviewed so we can be sure they are worthy of our time and resources. Maybe we should ask questions first and have compassion second.

Then I think of Jesus. Not only did He have compassion on the woman caught in adultery, but he had compassion on a sinner like me. I don’t think I’ll get to Heaven one day and be called into Jesus’ office just to hear Him say, “What were you thinking, Greg? You wasted a lot of time and money on those people who weren’t worthy of your help. They didn’t deserve it.” No, I don’t think that will happen, but another scarier thought comes to mind. What if in order to be a “good steward” I don’t help. What if I get to Heaven and am met at the gate by Jesus. He seems angry (or perhaps very sad). As I run up to Him, he speaks. “Greg what were you thinking? I wasted a lot of time and resources on you and you weren’t worthy. I even died on the cross for you. Yet I was hungry and thirsty and you didn’t feed me or give me drink. I was naked and you didn’t clothe me. I was sick and you didn’t come to me. I was in prison and you didn’t visit me.

I’m not worthy, yet Jesus loves me. I didn’t deserve it, yet Jesus saved me. No list of requirements to be met first - just His grace. How frustrated He must be sometimes when He watches me fail. Two steps forward, one step back. Sometimes one step forward, three steps back. Sometimes I wonder if I’m moving at all. Yet Jesus loves me.

So what are we called to do? First, love God with all of our heart, mind, soul & strength. Second, love our neighbor as ourselves. So where are you sleeping tonight?

Beaver Creek COB serving the homeless. Thanks to all who contributed!



Personality Profile Reveals

#1 Emma Eckard #2 Garry Kline



Look for more personality profiles in the January newsletter!